

ORTHOPÆDICS IN GENERAL PRACTICE. By W. H. Gervis, M.B., F.R.C.S. (Pp. 120; figs. 31. 10s. 6d.) London: William Heinemann Medical Books Ltd., 1958.

YOUR pet cat stretches fully and daily, why don't you? This is the thesis of this little book, which can be read easily in two hours. Lack of proper muscular activity, bad posture resulting from sedentary occupations and the general "flexed" attitude of society are, so says the author, the cause of a high proportion of those painful conditions of limbs and back which patients, with the profession's agreement, call "rheumatism."

The scope of the book is the field of minor orthopædics in general practice, with emphasis on painful conditions of the back and the feet. The author believes that many of these can quite easily be attended to by the doctor and need never be referred to hospital for corsets, physiotherapy and other measures which are of doubtful value.

Instruction on the proper use of the muscles of the back and feet and special exercises for them is contained in the book, and really this section forms the highlight of it.

This is a book for the general practitioner and, in the opinion of the reviewer, is much more likely to help him than more learned and bigger tomes on rheumatic disorders.

R. J. W. W

COFFEE AND CAFFEINE. By R. Ulrick. Translated from the German by Janet Ellingham. (Pp. 52. 7s. 6d.) Bristol: John Wright & Sons Ltd.

I HAVE often searched for examples of a really bad piece of medical writing. My search is now ended, and I can recommend all medical students and all who may ever have occasion to write an M.D. thesis to peruse the fifty-two pages of this monograph.

Even allowing that it is a translation from the original German, the style is appalling and the writing lacks clarity and is verbose. A thick haze of jargon lies between the reader and data which is often incorrect or outdated, generalizations which should never have been derived and some magnificent non-sequiturs.

The date of publication of the original German version of this monograph is not given, but one of the references quoted is an Italian paper published in 1950. There are forty-seven other papers quoted, but none is later than 1941.

After reading this monograph I turned once again to that small but instructive masterpiece by Clifford Allbutt entitled "Notes on the Composition of Scientific Papers," and if this review introduces this book to any who have not read it before, then my time has not been wasted.

O. L. W.

THE MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS' HANDBOOK. (Pp. 285. 12s. 6d.; members of the B.M.A. 10s., final-year students and new graduates 5s.) London: B.M.A. Publications.

THIS short book serves a useful purpose in providing the answer to many of the personal administrative problems confronting us as we attempt to carry on the practice of our profession. Though designed primarily for the new graduate, it will be of value to those of more maturity, if they will refer to the mass of factual information between its covers. Postgraduate education, entry into practice, contracts and agreements, medical protection and insurance are all discussed. Many aspects of concern to practitioners labouring in the National Health Service, such as details of duties, remuneration, pension rights, etc., which are of importance to us all, but which often seem shrouded in mystery, are explained clearly and concisely. There is nowhere any reference to the National Health Service in Northern Ireland where the relevant Acts contain minor differences from those of Great Britain. A few paragraphs explaining the essential differences would be of value to those in practice in this part of the United Kingdom, and could with value be included in the next edition. The handbook is well printed and adequately indexed.

G. T. C. H.